B Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1938-1939) 1962
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vives as the common substratum of Mundà forms of speech.' 174

A second theory, advocated by Sir W. Hunter and Mr. A. K. Keane, is to the effect that the Mundà family seems to have entered India by the north-eastern passes. Next, they met the influx of the Dravidians by the north-western passes and crossed each other. This is based on the hypothesis of Col. Dalton who believed that the forefathers of the Santals came from north-east India, and found their way to the Chotanagpur plateau by following

1. "The language of the Mundàs with their kindred dialects spoken by the Santals, Hos and the other allied tribes inhabiting the Chotanagpur plateau, has been shown by Peter Schmidt to form a sub-family of the family called by him Austro-Asiatic, which includes Mon Khmer, Wa, Nicoborese, Khasi and the aboriginal languages of Mallacca. There is another family which he calls Austronesian including Indonesian, Melanesian, and Polynesian. These two families are grouped into one great family which he calls the Austric." (Sir Edward Gait, Introduction to *The Mundàs and their Country*, page iv). The following extract also deserves notice, "Geologists tell us that the Indian Peninsula was formerly cut off from the north of Asia by sea, while a land connexion existed on the one side with Madagascar and on the other with Malay Archipelago ; and although there is nothing to show that India was then inhabited, we know that it was so in Palaelithic times, when communications were probably still easier with the countries to the south-east and south-west than with those beyond the Himalayas." (Ref. Sir Edward Gait's Introduction to *The Mundàs and their Country*, pp. ix-x). 197 174 174 (133).

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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CHAPTER II

HABITAT AND POPULATION

131 In this pear-shaped Bharatbarsa ranges after
[133] ranges of hills belonging to the present provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, roll on towards Central India. This wide area lies roughly between 20° and 28° North Latitude and 83° and 92° East Longitude. Santal Parganas, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Manbhum, Hazaribagh and Singbhum now claimed by Bihar; Mayurbhanj and Balasore now falling within Orissa; and Birbhum, Bankura and Midnapore still belonging to Bengal, fall within the area and form the habitat of different aboriginal tribes, of whom the Santals are the objects of our present study. Speaking
[361] approximately, the Santal settlements are found distributed over an area of 350 miles from the Ganges to the Baitarani, fairly bisected by the 87° Eastern Longitude.

133 A bird's-eye view of the topography of the portions of Bihar and of Orissa falling within our purview will reveal large areas of rock, laterite and
[137] gravel. Hills after hills form into ranges, bare of vegetation during the summer months and green
137 again with the rains. Clusters of Sal trees (*Shorea robusta*), Mohua (*Bassia latifolia*), Karam (*Adina*

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
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824 [22] [222] In the early morning one sees the ground strewn with the flowers and the Santals carefully gather the mohua flowers in the baskets. The Pipal, with its gnarled roots and spreading branches serves as the resting place and meeting ground of the Santals, and the Palas with its yellowish blaze of colour dazzles the country-side in the wintry months of the year.[1]

137 136 Large tracts of forests are frequently found within the area, the abode of ferocious tigers, elephants, *sambar* deer, leopards, hyaenas, deer and wild-pigs. The marshes abound in wild-ducks, pigeons, geese, snipe and partridge.

132 In the summer months, the heat is intense and rises in places upto 120° degrees and dust-storms and "loo" (*heat-wave*) are the rules rather than the exception. The rain-fall compared to Bengal is very low but it is cold during the winter, the minimum record being on an average 40° degrees.

• 133 137 The area in Bengal that falls within our scope is a belt of irregular thickness and furnishes a gradual change from the plateau to the plains of Bengal in an undulation, interspersed with forest growths at places. Here, more specially in Bankura, small isolated hillocks and short ranges of low hills, form,

1. Ref. *Dt. Gazetteer*, Santal Parganas, Vol. XXII, pp. 16-17. It is however incorrectly stated therein that that the *Palas* is in blossom in the hot season of the year, for it is only peculiar to the winter.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

what Hunter calls, "the advance guard of the hill system of the central India Plateau." Midnapur resembles Bankura more or less in topography; but it is not so hilly. It has its laterite soil, mohua and sal trees,—a characteristic back-ground inseparable from the Santals.

Distributed throughout this wide area live the Santal, a man of medium size but muscular and strong, with a complexion varying from light-brown to an ebony colour, almost beardless and his ox-eyed, merry women-folk. The physical features that distinguish them from the rest of the population are that they have a round outline and look rather stout. They have, what is called by Col. Dalton, "a blubbery style of face," noses broad with a depressed bridge, and hair black, straight, coarse and curly. The mouth is a large one and the lips thick and projecting; "the zygomatic arches prominent, while the proportions of the skull, approaching the dolichocephalic type, conclusively refute the hypothesis of their Mongolian descent."[1]

Although the theory of Mongolian descent of the Santal is no longer tenable, it is worth noting that faces of a Mongoloid type are sometimes seen amongst them. Rev. Bodding has seen "spots in the pigment of the skin of Santal children, which,

1 Ref. Risley, *People of India*, App. VIII, p. clvii.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

[P.1]

CHAPTER I

Introduction

The Santal Parganas is a district within Bhagalpur Division in Bihar, lying between 23° 40′ and 25° 18′ North latitude and between 86° 28′ and 87° 57′ East longitude. It is bounded on the north by the districts of Bhagalpur and Purnea, on the east by Malda, Murshidabad and Birbhum ; on the south by Burdwan and Manbhum ; and on the west by Hazaribagh, Monghyr and Bhagalpur. The principal range in the district is that of the Rajmahal Hills. They consist of a succession of hills, plateaus, valleys and ravines, the general elevation of which varies from 500 to 800 feet above sea level. A large portion of the range is included in the Daminikoh (the skirt of the hills). In the Santal parganas within the four subdivisions Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal, the Santals live in largest numbers. They live in Damin areas, where previously one could not enter without the permission of the Commissioner. The Santal living on the very tract of the Aryan overflooding Northern India (in fact very near the sacred triangular spot between Benares, Rajgir and Gaya which witnessed the phenomenal Upanishadic speculation of the days of Janak and the rise of Jainism and Buddhism) could not but have been influenced by these and in their turn must have considerably left their mark on the folk culture of Northern India. If there is any culture which still carries the impress of the underlying philosophic speculation and order of thought that was wide spread in India prior to the rise of the Dravidian culture, it was very likely the belief and

5: Culshaw M-5 (1932-1943) 1949 AW42 Santal AW42

102
131
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MAP OF EASTERN INDIA

The heavy shading represents areas where the Santals form ten per cent. or more of the population, the lighter shading where they form less than ten per cent. See also statistical addendum to Chapter I.

[P. iv]

Frontispiece

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CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF A PEOPLE

THE Santals are one of the largest of the tribal peoples of India; at the census of 1931 they numbered over two and a half million. Their villages are widely distributed over the area which lies between eighty-six and eighty-eight meridians east longitude and between twenty-two and twenty-six degrees north latitude. They are also found farther to the north-east, where some have settled in North Bengal and Western Assam. They are the most easterly of the great belt of primitive folk which stretches across Central India.

Where the Chota Nagpur plateau begins to give way to the Ganges plain the country is broken up into a series of ridges. Through the narrow valleys thus formed flow many streams which maintain a brief and furious life during the rains. There are few big rivers, and even these dry to nothingness in the hot season. In some parts there are ranges of low hills; in others conical-shaped hills rise abruptly from the undulating plain. The countryside is still for the most part well wooded, and the *sal* forests (*Shorea robusta*, Gartn.) contribute to the wellbeing of those who dwell in them. It is, however, a hard country in which to live, where the soil is rocky and the water supplies are scant.

Dr. B. S. Guha[1] has distinguished six main types among the races who inhabit India. The Santals belong to his second "main race", the Proto-Australoid, which he considers arrived in India soon after the Negritos. The name is given because of the similarity of racial type with Australian tribes. "We have no precise information as to when this race first came into India. It is found among the prehistoric skulls in the Tinnevelly district, and from references in early Sanskrit literature to 'Nishads', where they are described as noseless (*anash*) with dark skin colour and peculiar speech and habits, there can be no doubt that the Proto-Australoid tribes were meant."[2] The Santals are short in stature, and among them the broad flat nose with a sunken nose ridge is fairly common. They frequently have wavy hair; sometimes it is curly, though it is never frizzy. They share all these characteristics with other primitive tribes in the same group. Dr. Guha has cautiously attempted to state

[1] B. S. Guha, *Oxford Pamphlets on Indian Affairs*, "Racial Elements in the Population", 1944.
[2] B. S. Guha, *op. cit.*, p. 11.